

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7186

INFO AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5226

LIMDIS

FOR STEDMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

MONTEVIDEO FOR ASST SECRETARY TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PVOR PFOR GT UK BH

SUBJ: SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION

REF: STATE 195280

1. I APPRECIATE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON APPROACH DESCRIBED IN REFTEL AS I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST A CHANGE WHICH I BELIEVE WILL GIVE US A ABETTER CHANCE OF ACHIEVING OUR SEVERAL PURPOSES. ESSENTIALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE US DIVORCE OUR NOTIFICATION TO GOG OF OUR DECISION ON AMMUNITION SALE FROM OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

2. IN MY ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATION TO PROCEED WITH SALE (GUATEMALA 4879), I SAW OUR ACTION PARTLY AS A GESTURE TO PRESIDENT LAUGERUD IN LIGHT OF HIS REPOSIBLE BEHAVIOR AND HIS RESPONSIVENESS TO OUR SUGGESTIONS DURING HEIGHT OF BELIZE CRISIS. IT WAS SEEN AS A STEP WHICH SHOULD ADD TO THE MUTUAL CONFIDENCE AND GOODWILL BETWEEN US AND PRESUMABLY
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HELP US PRESERVE OUR INFLUENCE WITH HIM IN THE DIALOGUE AHEAD. IF WE SEEM TO BE TYING THIS DECISION TOO SPECIFICALLY TO OTHER OF OUR CONSIDERATIONS, I FEAR IT WILL NOT HAVE THE SAME PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECT. THIS DECISION SHOULD STAND ALONE, AND I WOULD HOPE TO BE AUTHORIZED TO COMMUNICATE IT TO THE PRESIDENT AS A SERARATE MATTER.

3. AS FOR THE APPROACH ON BELIZ3, MY MAIN CONCERN IS THAT WE NOT APPEAR TO BE COMING DOWN TOO HEAVEILY ON BRITISH SIDE, SOMETHING I DON'T THINK WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST AND SOMETHING WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY RISK DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GUATEMALA AND IMPAIR OUR CREDIBILITY AND INFLUENCE AS AN IMPARTIAL BROKER IN BELIZE QUESTION I SUGGEST THAT I BE AUTHORIZED TO CALL ON FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA, AT LEAST IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, TO URGE THEM TO GET ON WITH THE EFFORT TO SETTLE THE DISPUTE. I COULD POINT OUT THAT, IN THE LIGHT OF THE SERIOUS CRISIS THAT DEVELOPED IN MID-SUMMER, WE ARE NOW CONCERNED THAT THE ISSUE NOT BE SIDE-TRACKED UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS. I COULD INQUIRE AGAIN ABOUT ACCEPTANCE OF BRITISH INVITATION FOR TEAM TO VISIT LONDON IN ADVANCE OF SEPTEMBER MEETING AND, IF NECESSARY, URGE THAT TEAM GO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I COULD NOTE OUR CONCERN THAT THE NEXT GUATEMALAN GOVERNMENT MIGHT HAVE LESS FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH THIS DELICATE ISSUE THAN THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, WITH THE ATTENDANT POSSIBILITY OF FURTHER DEALY AND THE CONSEQUENT DANGER OF A NEW, MOR SERIOUS CRISIS. I COULD REITERATE THAT WE ARE PERSUADED THAT THE MONKEY RIVER LINE IS NOT SALEABLE TO THE BRITISH, THAT THIS APPEARS TO BE THE OPTIMUM TIME TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WITH WHICH BOTH SIDES COULD LIVE EVEN IF SOMWHAT UNHAPPILY, AND URGE THE DESIRABILITY OF MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY IN NEGOTTIATING WITH THE BRITISH ON THE QUESTION OF THE LINE. DEPENDING ON THE RESULTS OF THIS APPROACH, I
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COULD SUBSEQUENTLY MAKE THE SAME POINTS DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT BUT I WOULD PREFER NOT TO BYPASS THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHO HAS BEEN OUR PRINCIPAL CONTACT ON THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE FIRST TIME AROUND.

4. I CAN RECALL SEVEN TIMES THAT I, OR VISITING US OFFICIALS, HAVE DISCUSSED HUMAN RIGHTS WITH PRESIDENT OR FOREIGN MINISTER IN RECENT MONTHS, IN ADDITION TO OUR EXCHANGE OF NOTES ON HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING WHICH LED TO GUATEMALA'S REJECTION OF FUTURE MILITARY AID, AND BOTH ARE KEENLY AWARE OF IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO OVSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS HERE. GUATEMALA IS CERTAINLY A COUNTRY WHERE WE SHOULD PURSUE THIS ISSUE BUT I AM BEGINNING TO BE CONCERNED THAT, THROUGH SHEER REPETITION, WE MAY BE RISKING A STRIDENCY THAT I BELIVE WE SHOULD AVOID. WE NOW HAVE TWO FURTHER SUGGESTIONS THAT WE RAISE THIS SUBJECT -- IN CONNECTION WITH THE AMMUNITION SALE AND IN CONNECTION WITH AID LOANS AUTHORIZATION (STATE 194207). I THINK WE CAN USEFULLY RAISE IT IN CONNECTION WITH THE AID LOANS-- SEPTTEL WILL FOLLOW-- BUT I WOULD MUCH PREFER NOT TO LINK IT TO ARMS SALE FOR REASONS STATED IN PARAGRAPH TWO. WE SHOULD ALSO KEEP IN MIND THAT AT SOME POINT

NEARER THE ELCTIONS WE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY WANT TO MAKE
A POINTED APPROACH TO THE PRESIDENT WITH RESPECT TO
FREE AND HONEST ELECTIONS, AND SUCH APPROACH WILL
CARRY MORE WEIGHT IF WE HAVE NOT BEEN TO THE WELL
TOO OFTEN.

5. FINALLY, YOU HAVE ASKED FOR MY COMMENTS ABOUT
THE LEGITIMACY OF THE GOG'S REQUEST FOR FIVE MILLION
ROUNDS. WE AGREE THAT THIS IS A REASONABLE BASIC
LOAD AND ALSO THAT THEIR INVENTORY FROM OTHER SOURCES
IS LOW. CONSIDERING THE USE OF THIS FIVE MILLION
ROUNDS FOR THE BASIC LOAD, TRAINING, AND FAMILIARIZATION,
IT WOULD BE CONSUMED IN A SHORT PERIOD. IN VIEW
OF THE LOW INVENTORY ON HAND, WHICH WE ESTIMATE AT
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LESS THAN TEN MILLION ROUNDS, WE RECOMMEND THAT WE
AUTHORIZE THE FULL FIVE MILLION.
BOSTER

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